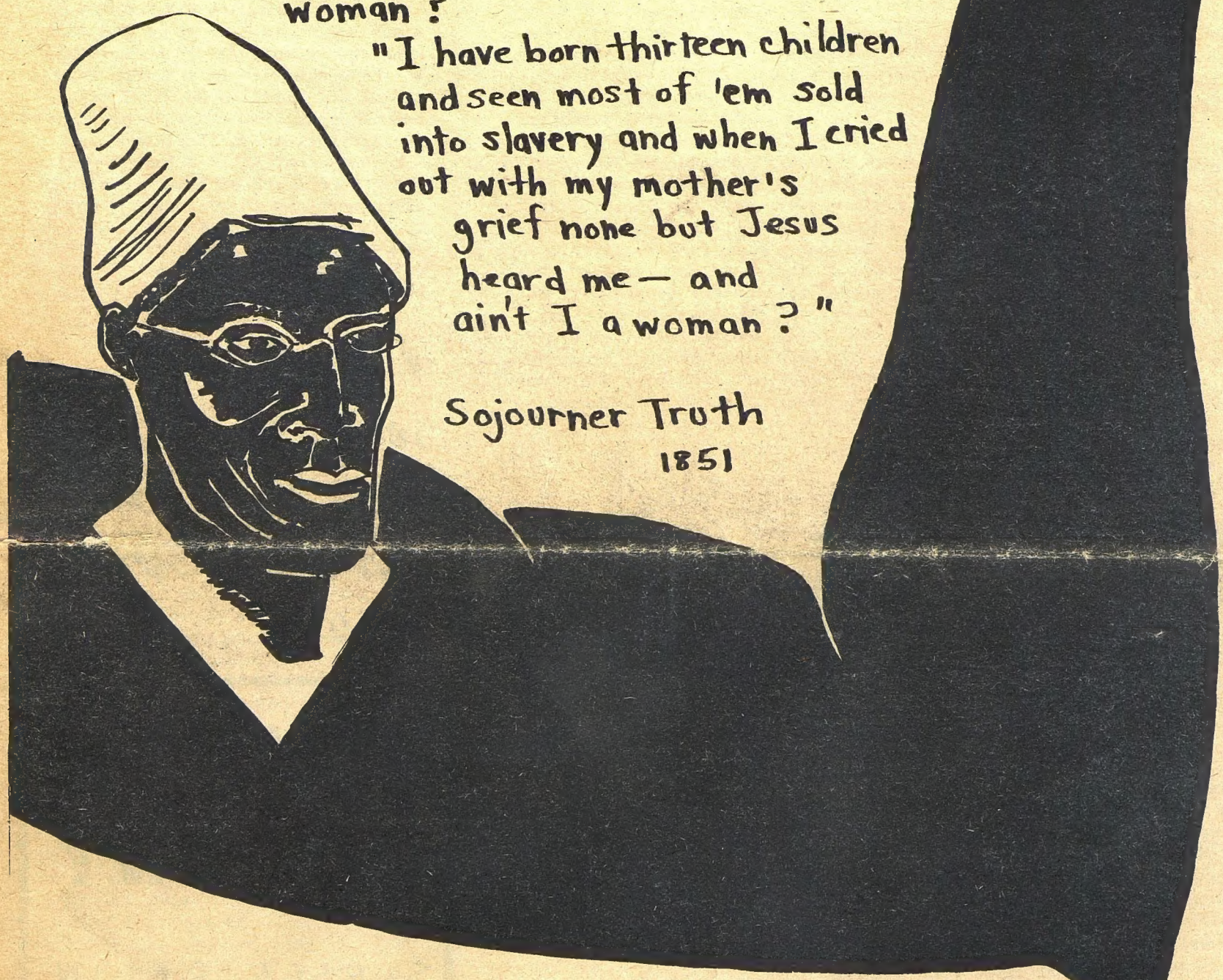
"The man over there says women need to be helped into carriages and lifted over ditches, and to have the best place everywhere. Nobody ever helps me into carriages or over puddles, or gives me the best place — and ain't I a woman?

"Look at my arm! I have ploughed and planted and gathered into barns and no man could head me - and ain't I a woman? I could work as much and eat as much as a man - when I could get it - and bear the lash as well! and ain't I a woman?

"I have born thirteen children and seen most of 'em sold into slavery and when I cried out with my mother's grief none but Jesus heard me — and ain't I a woman?"

Sojourner Truth
1851



Ain't I a Woman!

25¢

A MIDWEST NEWSPAPER OF WOMEN'S LIBERATION
Volume I No. 1 June 26, 1970
PUBLISHED BY THE PUBLICATIONS COLLECTIVE, IOWA CITY WLF

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editorial

There are many reasons why we felt a need to put out a paper in Iowa City. Until now there have been no underground or peoples papers in Iowa City. There have only been the usual commercial town paper and the University paper. Neither can be trusted to function as a service for the people who read them. Both subscribe to the good journalistic "professionalism" thus being written for the people not by the people. Both are controlled by capitalist interests and concerns. Both, as most newspapers, display unmitigated sexism.

We also feel that there is a special need to increase communication between sisters in the Mid-West. Not only because this will make large actions possible and events better publicized but because we see the Mid-West as having particular problems and conditions with which we have to deal. Women in the mid-west with the exception of the few large urban areas, find themselves working in their city's only women's liberation group. There simply are not numbers enough to split along many interest or political lines. Sometimes the organization itself is the only group within a radius of 50 miles or more. Unlike our sisters in Chicago or Detroit, who have large brown and black populations and proportionately large working class populations, most of us tend to work in groups that are campus based rather than community based. We find ourselves dealing with middle-class, university privilege and bourgeois mentality and find it difficult to gear our actions toward meeting the needs of the last first even though we are committed to do this. It is also difficult to find targets to attack as big industry and media pigs tend to nest on the east or west coasts. We have no Grove Press here. Those of us working in the mid-west need to work out these problems together.

There are special reasons, however, why we needed a paper for and by women. All of us tend not only to be without confidence in this area but also without developed ability. We need to develop all kinds of abilities and know we have not been able to do this working jointly with men. We would tend to do mostly routine shit work even if this wasn't imposed on us. We would volunteer for it since we don't feel the confidence to volunteer for or do more statusy work. Even if the men we worked with were free from the male chauvinist pig mentality that has intimidated and humilated us all our lives, (this situation is pure fantasy at this stage of the game), we have been conditioned to play our subordinate role too well and have had too many experiences of seeing ourselves pitted against each other in some ridiculous, competitive way. And this would most likely happen since men, although some see the implications of women's liberation, tend to work in the same way using the same pig structures as before.

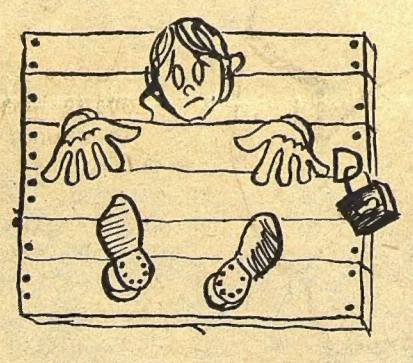
It is important to put out a newspaper in our own way - a collective way. We want no hierarchy of editor, assistants, staff, etc. All the people working on the paper should be involved in all decisions and policy. We want to maintain no "professional" standards. "Professionalism" has been used as an excuse for the educated elite to corner the market on knowledge and communication. We feel all women have something to say and can say it. We have been kept down by rigid structures forever. We don't want any part of them - even the top part. We want new structures that do not allow people to fall into leader/follower, boss/worker, powerful/powerless roles. We don't want to work in any situation in which we are oppressed or in any situation in which we do oppress.

Not only do we want to work collectively on the AIN"T I A WOMAN staff but would like to expand that kind of collectivity to all sisters in the mid-west. In addition to asking for articles we would like committments from other WL groups in the mid-west to do their own page.

We hope that AIN'T I A WOMAN will serve as a forum of communication between women in the mid-west about ideas, actions, and events. This issue is mostly by and about Iowa City Women's Liberation Front - we hope that won't happen again.

Vickie Pat Debbie
Dale Linda Penny
Lori Carole Julie
Carol Anne Pat Sue
Linda

hang ups



I can't write.
If I try to write something, no one will like it, but they'll be afraid to say so, so they'll print it anyway, and it will ruin the paper; they'll hate me and I'll feel awful.
Maybe I should just volunteer to type and paste up--no, just type; I don't know how to paste up.
What do we know about putting out a newspaper? Maybe other Mid-Western groups won't know much either so they won't know it's bad; but I bet they will know and think Iowa City is funky.
Maybe all the other sisters will know how to do stuff and I won't have to do anything; but I'll still feel bad.
Even if we make money, we'll probably lose it somehow.
The printer might screw us.
The male radicals, who all know how to write, will laugh.
I don't know how to draw and maybe no one else does either.
Maybe I'll ruin my film.
If I walk around taking pictures, everyone will think "that woman thinks she's real good" and then I'll be bad and they'll laugh.
When we finish laying out our first issue, I'll spill coffee on it.

You can contribute by sending us articles, reviews, opinions, rages, etc. You can also contribute by committing your women's liberation group to a page, either in each issue or in every other issue. This kind of committment is the best way to make a mid-west paper of AIN'T I A WOMAN? The page can be articles (or any kind of printed material), pictures, drawings, cartoons, poems, etc. Fill it; it's yours! Write if your group is interested. We'll send details, deadlines. etc.

If your group wants to receive bundles of AIN'T I A WOMAN, send 15¢ per copy (minimum bundle: 20 copies) in advance.

AIN'T I A WOMAN?

SUBSCRIPTION

NAME_____

ADDRESS_____

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24 issues $4.00

AIN'T I A WOMAN? is published on the second and fourth Fridays of each month by the Publications Collective of the Iowa City Women's Liberation Front, 301 Jefferson Bldg., Iowa City 52240

Gay Womanhood

Tues.: The morning of the meeting on "Loving Women" I woke up with a terrible pain in my stomach. I couldn't remember what made us think that we had anything to say that was important enough to call a meeting for. Why can't we think that just what we feel is valid enough to talk about without it being heavy or theoretical or well written or well said? That afternoon we planned an agenda and that helped calm my stomach.

We discussed why we don't show our affection for each other by touching or hugging. It's such a glaring problem because it's so obvious that we care for each other very much. The only time we seem to feel that it's alright to touch each other is when one of us is so upset that she needs to be comforted. It's like we need an excuse to show how we feel.

I think we decided that our inhibition stemmed from fear that our touch would be taken sexually or that other people might think that we were lesbians. The gay caucus talked about that too. We felt even more inhibited when it came to touching because we didn't know how the sisters would take it. It was decided though that this fear is another example of how society uses lesbianism to keep women apart.

I should start out by admitting that it is very difficult for me to deal with this subject. I have found the whole subject of sexual relations terribly painful all my life, feeling horribly battered around by the pressures to have relations, the pressures to not have relations, and my knowing that I couldn't fit into either the image of a woman in this society (which is heterosexual) or the image of a lesbian which this society "crudely" projects.

I guess I am just mixed up about where I fit in the whole spectrum. After the lesbian workshop when the gay sisters announced the caucus and the workshop they were having, I felt somehow left out but also very anxious for the workshop because I had been wanting to talk about this. I kind of feel as if I am a strong separatist not really by any intellectual choice but because I just am. I have no desire for heterosexual relations. I cannot relate to men. I always feel too intimidated and humiliated. I don't know if I think this is a valid way to feel but that is how I feel and therefore relations with men at least for the time being are out of the question. But I don't know how to relate to women even though I know I will have to look to women for my social needs. I do feel physical attraction to other women but this frightens me and I don't know how to deal with it. I tend to feel very intense about one person at a time.

I guess basically I feel that all one-to-one intense emotional relationships are oppressive. I have never been close to anyone without feeling that it has been somewhat a power relationship with one of us caring or being more hung up than the other, with one of us being weak, one strong, one passive, one aggressive. I have experienced this in all relations whether sex was involved or not, but it has been intensified in sexual relations.

The purpose of having a gay page in this paper is to provide a forum for gay women to talk about gay womanhood: sharing experiences and problems and redefining the gay world. Our goal is to open up ourselves to promote understanding in the hope of breaking down the fears and taboos that keep us apart.

In May, Iowa City Women's Liberation met for a day of local workshops on sexuality, one of which was lesbian consciousness. Because we felt that all the sisters could benefit from a discussion of the issues that concern gay women, we planned and held a workshop on loving women.

In the first meetings of the gay sisters, we were most concerned with communicating with our straight sisters, but through consciousness-raising, we began to understand that our needs were important and valid in their own right. For these reasons, we agreed to form a gay cell of Women's Liberation.

Anyone interested in joining us or in contributing articles call: 353-5937, or write: Gay Women's Liberation Collective, 301 Jefferson Building, Iowa City, Iowa 52240.

I came into the Women's Liberation Seminar on Loving Women as a new member of Women's Liberation and as a part of the Gay Women's Liberation Caucus.

At the first workshop once the dialogue began, ideas and, more importantly, feelings seemed to flow freely. We spoke about how showing affection in a physical way is nice and in many cases should be freer among us. We also discussed roles, stereotypes, and the positive political aspect of lesbianism concerning Women's Liberation. Generally, the questions and responses of the non-lesbian sisters were full of concern to understand and in some cases showed a growing desire to relate to other women on a more intimate and mutually meaningful level. My deepest emotional response - perhaps a combination of gratitude and affection - came as I listened to a friend who had only recently discovered that some of her closer sisters were lesbians. She obviously still held doubts and probably anxieties about the issue, but instead of any withdrawal of affection toward these sisters, her words were full of affection and deep concern.

Tues.: Considering that there were over 40 women at this workshop, I think the discussion moved along very well. It didn't get too personal, but I think our number prevented an in-depth discussion. The first topic - on touching - was an interesting and pertinent lead-in to the subject of loving women. Points were raised that I thought were very true, but hadn't given much thought to before. I enjoyed listening to the different views and opinions that were expressed, and thought the evening was very successful. I know I went away with several new ideas to think over.

At the first workshop, I felt as if lesbianism was being presented as the alternative and I guess I have heard too many voices (like my ex-psychiatrist) telling me to have sexual relations - that it's really groovy - that I am just personally hung up. I felt like I was hearing more of the same. I don't think I have ever felt that lesbianism was repulsive or wrong or any of the other shit that society has already told me but I guess I do feel pretty threatened by the subject.

On May 19th a meeting was held on "Loving Women".

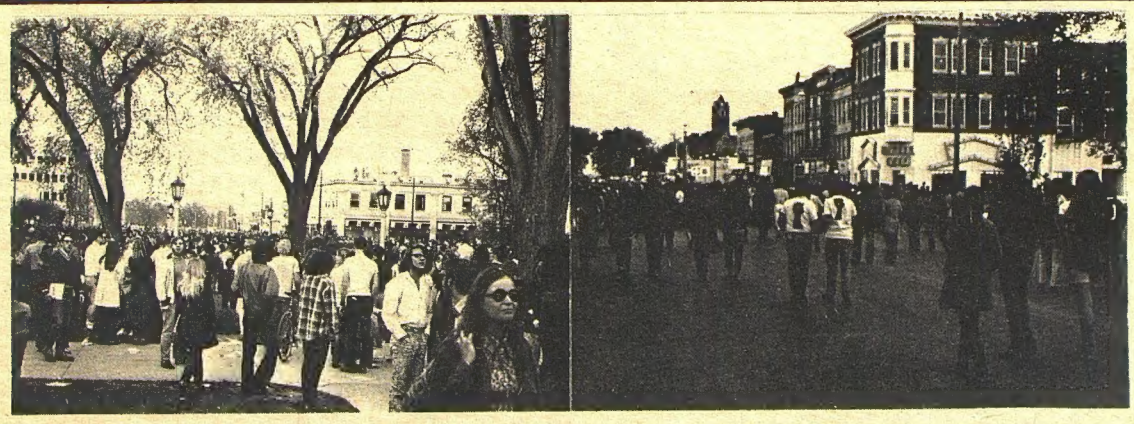
To start off the meeting we went around the room with each sister stating one attribute of women which they really admired. They were: Warmth, perseverance, good to look at, less destructive humor, logic argument without bullshitting, courage, aggressiveness, honest motives, sensitivity, tolerance, patience, frankness, strong bodies (hands in particular), practicality, loyalty, clarity of expression, consistency in personal relationships, tenderness, openness, smell of women, organizing power, and the manifestation of potential in present Women's Lib movements.

As a result, I feel quite a good number of sisters agree that women are (bodily) much more beautiful than men. And then, too, the other attributes enhance this beauty - inside our strong and beautiful bodies are strong and beautiful minds. Looking back over the list, I notice many of those pleasing attributes could be applied <u>either</u> physically or intellectually.

There are some sisters who are asexual because love and sex are so intricately tied in with our socio-political system that they (love and sex) become exploitative institutions themselves. This to me is one more argument <u>for</u> loving sisters - since this system is male-run, we can find our needed togetherness with our sisters.

The prospect of being able to love a sister as I have loved a man appears much more gratifying and beautiful than a heterosexual relationship could ever be. And not just that - it appears much more sensible, for we have a hell of a lot more in common - we're all sisters!

Following a week of window smashing,mass rallies,and the burning of the old armory building,students at the Univ. of Iowa voted to strike under the following demands: (1) U.S. out of Indo-China now,(2) An end to all political repression,(3) An end to all racist attacks on black people especially the Black Panther Party;and an end to sexism(the exploitation of women),(4) The abolishment of ROTC and all military recruitment on this campus,(5) The punishment by law of police who assaulted students, especially the police who shot at the four blacks,(6) The granting of amnesty for all persons protesting American's Aggressive War in southeast Asia,(7) The Tuesday, May 12 meeting of faculty senate on the status of ROTC must have 10 student representatives. Roll call vote published,(8) All university employees affected by the strike be paid for lost wages.



Monday night, sitting in the union, I say to Ginna,"No more confrontation politics." She agrees. We are all angry about Kent State. Hours later the phone wakes me. It's Da-da. There are people in the streets downtown. Should we go? We'll feel horrible in the morning if we don't. I say, "Pick me up. I'll be ready in 5 minutes."

It is a typical street riot. I am scared & concerned about the make-up of the group. It begins to sound like a big social event. "Hey, there's Shelley." "There's Carmen & Bruce." "Let's go talk to them." "Aren't many political people here." "Hey, let's stay together." The crowd smashes windows at Iowa Book & Supply. That's cool. The place exploits the hell out of students. But the crowd stops short of really looting. I wanted them to. I wanted them to smash & loot the hell out of the whole town but I was in the back of the crowd-unsure-immobile-chickenshit. Wished we could find more sisters. I keep saying to myself, "I've been through this movie before." Where are all the women? Do I want to get arrested now? Aren't I saving my ass for some glorious women's rebellion? More sisters show up and we muddle through the evening.

The events that followed for the next two weeks led my mind to mull over questions I still haven't answered, like how do I relate to the crowd that masses for rallies every night, how do I relate as a feminist? I realized soon that I had to somehow participate. I was too angry about Kent, about Cambodia, about a lot to do nothing. I also have a gut feeling of guilt about everything evil that takes place. I know that the enemy can do what it wants. It has all the power. But I am responsible for what it does if I allow it to function against only my silence.

Saturday people get together in the union and vote to strike. We begin to choose demands and I think, "I have joined the student left again. I am giving up romantic fantasies of all women strong & separate fighting together but there are still minimal conditions for my existence. They must at least grant a sentence: We demand the end to sexism. I am too scared to bring it up. I've done that before in student politics and soon learned that as a woman I had few friends there. My husband proposes it. Jesus Christ, I know he was sincere but after all the scene was too much to take. I'm too scared so my husband fights for women's rights. Good Gawd! There is a typical left fight over it. I could have fallen asleep & known what would be said. Divisive Divisive-If you really care about ending the war you'll give up your personal concerns and fight on that issue, etc. However, they finally voted as one demand, "an end to racism & attacks on the Black Panther Party and an end to sexism (the exploitation of women.)" They had to add the latter in parens cause most of them didn't know what sexism was. Some thought it was promiscuity. Dig that!

Well, I decided that at least some good political education could come out of it. At least people would know what sexism was. But it is still hard to work with people who don't have their heads together. It is hard to work with men when they call you chick and are taking masculine political ego trips, or women who are so damaged that they have no self-esteem, who can't understand why they should mind being called a chick. Everyone was involved for different reasons. Some wanted to protest the war, some primarily wanted ROTC off campus. People kept running around saying, "Join us--you don't have to support all the demands--if you support one of them join us.'Well that kind of reasoning stinks and here's why:

We want a just society where people--all people--have a chance to develop & be truly alive. It is not enough to be against the war and not against the exploitation of other peoples--any people by anyone. It is not enough to be against ROTC on campus and not support an end to racism. It is not enough to be against racism and not against sexism. It is not enough to want justice for only some people.

If a revolution came off tomorrow in this country it would be a mess and little worth the trouble. For a revolution to mean anything it has to come from a mass of people who collectively want to end oppression of anyone by anyone. There is a lot of work to be done till people collectively are willing to fight for everything that is just. And there is even more work to be done till a sufficient number of people are willing to risk small privileges today for no privilege tomorrow, till students are willing to chuck their A's until their campus is decent enough for human beings to live and work there with dignity.

By the end of the activity there still was no collective thinking on what we were really fighting for let alone tactics, but some people (mostly men) were at least starting to verbally defend all of the demands and doing a nice job of it and coming to some kind of understanding on why all the issues were important and related. Maybe that's a beginning.

A lot of things happened during the May strike actions at Iowa. Also, a lot of things didn't happen: like violence and extensive property damage. Nonetheless, a frightened university establishment reacted hysterically against the terror that never came, and took a few victims of their own. Chief among these were four students: Leona Durham, the newly-appointed editor of the campus newspaper, The Daily Iowan, and three "radicals" on her staff. They were fired before they had ever put out a single issue of the paper.

Although the firing would probably not have happened at a quieter time, certain key figures at the newspaper were worried about Leona from the day she had been hired, one month before she was fired. She expressed some radical ideas, she was a graduate student who had never previously been connected with the paper, and she was a woman.

The sexist issues, then, didn't stand alone, but they were there. The day after she was hired, Leona was quoted in the paper as saying she hoped to have at least 50% of her staff female. That started the rumor mill producing, and it got some fresh material a few days later, when Leona ran an ad for new staff members. The ad, among other things, invited those interested in "bread and roses for all" to apply for jobs. Among a cluster of really absurd rumors (she was a "Communist plant from Berkely"; she "announced" she would follow a policy of "deliberately slanting the news"; and many others) was the story that she was involved in the women's liberation movement. (She was, and is.) In its context, this was obviously meant to show her disreputable character.

A week before she was to take over-Leona complained to the advertising manager about two grossly sexist ads that had recently run, and told him that when she became editor, he was not to accept such atrocities. This story soon made the rounds as a rumor that she had demanded complete control over all advertising.

Both the current editor and the chairman of the board which oversees the paper expressed sexist attitudes against Leona. The editor, Lowell Forte, told one of his staff that a woman shouldn't be editor of a newspaper. The chairman, a political science professor, has long been notorious for his male chauvinism: He allegedly once refused to work on the same staff with a woman (the poly sci department is still 100% male), and reportedly once told a class that "any red-blooded male who says he wants to come home to a wife who is competitive is lying." During the week when he led the movement to fire Leona, he told one of the paper's staff that "Leona can convince me of many things about her political beliefs, but she can't convince me she isn't pro-women's rights."

When Leona was initially suspended, she was not given an adequate explanation of the board's high-handed actions. She was first told that in a time of crisis, the old staff was more experienced and should stay on; then, later, that she and the other three were "technically incompetent," and, finally, that by publically protesting her suspension, she had shown a "lack of faith" in the board and thus deserved to be fired. Fear of radicals, the student protests, faculty outrage at a student who talked back to them, petty politics by old Iowan staffers angry that an "outsider" had been picked as editor, and sexism all combined to give Leona the axe.

But Leona isn't a passive type of female, and she did not meekly accept the board's decision. She fought back with help from several lawyers and from many liberals and radicals who were appalled at the board's unjust action. And when the local chapter of the ACLU urged the board to reconsider the firing, things began to look up for Leona.

Under all this pressure, the board set up an outside fact-finding commission to hear the case. On June 11 the commission released a blistering report, which stated that the board acted "unreasonably and without sufficient cause" in firing Leona, and recommended that she be fully reinstated. In their words, "the overwhelming evidence is that the board threw Leona to the lions--and then blamed her for getting bitten."

One week later, the board met and reinstated her. She and her new staff took over The Daily Iowan on June 20, after one last nasty jab by the old Iowan staff. Ungracious in defeat, these sexists put a filler item in their last issue of the paper which said: "The Women's Liberation Movement is something. The trouble with most women who insist they can get along without men--is they look like they already have."

Carole

BRING IT ALL DOWN!
and hurry it up cause
BABYLON IS hurting me.

Thoughts about the strike: very confused. I felt at a loss as to how to relate as a woman and as a person to what was going on; I wanted to rejoice in the window-smashing, building-burning, etc., yet couldn't feel there was any clear political motivation for it--they seemed to be just half-assed undirected property-damage trips participated in as much (or more) by idiot jocks as by dedicated revolutionaries on the path to a Goal. I couldn't stand the endless pompous chauvinist male-rapping at rallies--why the hell didn't I have the courage or togetherness or whatever to get up there and straighten everyone out (ha)? An air of excitment, things happening, the Revolution coming home to roost--yet nothing significant occurred. The passionate angry desire to act--yet how? Not just by trailing along following the crowd. The choice seemed to be between 1-woman violent action which I was too scared to undertake, and getting ourselves together as women to seize the leadership and do something serious. But, I thought, that can't be done on the spur of the moment; have to know things about tactics, have complete trust in our cohorts, be confident of our analysis and ability to carry it out. Whence cometh such confidence if not by doing it?

I really don't know if any good came out of the strike. So the Faculty Senate offed ROTC--the trustees will doubtless veto their decision. A few students may have been politicized by the obvious freakout of the police in several instances, or in the mass arrest of 200+peaceful sit-in-ers, or in the spur-of-the-moment suspension, then firing, of the new DI editor. But I felt my own lack of political development during the crisis, and I think a great many would-be radicals felt similarly. An eye-opener. Perhaps the next time we'll be better prepared?

Penny

Dum-dum DAY CARE (title chosen by the children)

The Iowa City child care collective decided to start a free day care center. We got the basement of a campus Lutheran chapel to use for free. It's one big carpeted room with a kitchen and bathroom off to one end. The people donated toys, four cribs, two bassinets, four mattresses and two playpens and got together on a Saturday morning and made more toys from scrap lumber. We made a large playpen where there's plenty of room for several non-walkers to crawl around without getting trampled or picking up chokable bits.

There are 16 children involved but no more than 13 come at one time. They are all under 3 years old (one is 4 weeks, another was born 3 days ago and will come starting next week).

The adults come there according to a fixed weekly schedule. About half of us are volunteers and half are parents. One-fourth to one-half of the adults there at one time are male volunteers and fathers. Parents must put in 8 hours a week unless they are working. Six adults come every morning and 5 every afternoon.

We take the walking children to the city park every morning and take the babies outside to the small church lawn. One day a week the 2 year olds go to a farm 20 miles away where one of the children lives. Everything is free play and so far we haven't insisted on naps although we may have to. They're very possessive so we're trying to insist that "everything is everybody's!" instead of "mine." It hasn't changed any behavior but it's semantically better for us.

Parents bring lunch, clean diapers, and a clean change of clothes and do their own laundering. We have collective snack material (apples, juice, crackers) which is supplied by one set of parents a week.

We haven't got into any legal hassles yet. At first we checked on certification requirements but decided we didn't want welfare breathing down our backs. Unfortunately one of us was in the food stamp line and was recognized so we're sort of trapped into going next week. The lawyer said he did't think we had to be certified but welfare thinks otherwise. We've had all parents sign liability releases but we don't know how much good they'll do. The lawyer said that certification, incorporation and liability insurance are all prerequisites for each other plus a showing of financial stability (I guess we are stable at nothing) and permanence.

A medical student arranged to have four med students come to the center one evening and give all the children medical examinations under the supervision of their pediatrics professor. These free physicals were both a service to the parents and for use in case of emergencies.

We've decided to try to set up at least a couple more day care centers before the end of the summer. These will be more parent established and controlled. A couple of us will try to phase ourselves out of this center to help with setting up the new ones. We'll also ask the parents in this center to use some of their liberated time to help a new group of parents get set up.

For the summer the political use of the day care centers will be self education about what's involved in day care and whatever organizing can be done with the parents and volunteers involved. When the students return to campus in the fall we will use the centers to makes demands on the University.

One thing that's happening is that we're finding ourselves in the position where we may be working politically with men. But we definitely want men to start taking responsibility for children and when they take this responsibility and work 8 hours or more a week they should have a say on the day care center's political use.

In many ways we're finding ourselves in an "after the revolution" position before the revolution. We teach the kids that everything's everyone's but what can we say when they want to take a ride in a car that's just sitting there but isn't ours? We're in a position of feigned equality with men which is a strain on us all. I suppose it's because we hope the kids will be "after the revolution" people -- but I don't know how much good or bad our dishonesty is doing to them or to us.

phyllis

ABORTION

How it happened, although not part of this story, is the story. I really should have known. "It can't happen to me" just isn't realistic. Neither was a relationship with a guy who felt his manhood threatened by birth control. Get that - manhood - not personhood.

Through California's underground at that time you could get anything. One of the cruelest things available was a doctor in Berkeley, who would give shots (estrogen, I think) so that if your period was late it'd bring it on. But the story went that if you went soon enough, you could actually abort. He had quite a business going. Cost about $40, and hurt like hell. This was when my period was about 2 days late.

After waiting a week or 10 days, and having one pregnancy test prove o.k., though inconclusive, I went back to the doctor. This time it was conclusive.

The next day, having heard that physical exertion can bring on an abortion, I washed, swam, and ran once around the track. The next day I started looking for an abortionist. The Bay area at this time had several prestigious doctors at prestigious hospitals under indictment for psychiatric abortions, so the search wouldn't be easy.

I contacted a campus minister whom I had gotten to know well, and he started phoning around. The search narrowed to a doctor in Tijuana, who everyone seemed to have heard of, including my family doctor, after we went through the bit about homes for unwed mothers, etc.

There apparently had been busts over the border, so it took several phone calls to really make connections. As an added precaution he spoke only Spanish. The price - $1000, plus a fancy hotel and transportation. It was finally reduced to $800, and after what's-his-name said he wasn't going, and I said I'd go alone if I had to, the campus minister and I made plans to go.

We emptied my savings account and borrowed some from what's-his-name's roommate (the total extent of all support, moral and financial). The next morning we flew: S.F.-L.A., L.A. - San Diego. I thought that I had had morning sickness pretty bad, but by the time we finally got off the plane in San Diego I was so nauseated I could hardly move.

We finally get up to this big big hotel at the top of a hill (The Coronado?) It looks expensive. This is our "contact point." We find out what the rates are and check in at the cheap motel across the street. The campus minister keeps calling Tijuana. Not from the motel - it might be bugged. When he could get him, because I was under 21, I couldn't take the bus across. We finally are told (late the next day) to go to a certain room in the hotel and ask for what was obviously a fictitious name. I had used my real name. And he couldn't rent a car because he had left his identification in his car at the SF airport.

We went. By this time the whole thing had gotten to be something like you read in a spy thriller. A bad one. So we meet two couples. One was engaged, the other friends. We called and were told to drive to a certain spot, and we'd be told there where to go next. When we got there, we were told to drive to the High Life Palace. So we drive up and down this road for half an hour, looking for this place. We were also getting pretty panicky. Finally we see a place - the Jai Alai Palace. How could we have known? So we pull into their parking lot, and wait. We make contact, and are to follow this car. It pulls away with a squeal of its tires, and we almost lose it. We finally pull up at this building, and are told to be very quiet. We are - we're petrified. We are led into this room, where our money is taken.

The doctor asks who wants to be first. She is given a robe and is taken into the next room. We can hear most of what's going on. She screamed, and the doctor and the nurse would say, "Hush, do you want them to come and find us and take you to jail?" It didn't stop her from screaming. After about 20 minutes she comes out and sits down and gags. I'm next. I found out why she screamed. They only gave enough ether to keep you hovering between consciousness and unconsciousness. And it hurt. I had something to bite on, but it could only do so much. I did try not to scream. I tried to take more ether, but they wouldn't let me. The pain finally was undifferentiated, just in waves. And then it was over, and I too staggered out to the waiting room and gagged. At that point that humiliation was pretty insignificant. Then the other woman. Right after she was done, we got in the car, and tore off for the jai alai palace. Then we were on our own. They asked at the border what we'd been doing. So we gave the standard answer "Shopping." And where we were from. But we got through and headed for San Diego. By this time the pain was like period cramps. Just like before.

That night I recounted in detail the whole procedure to the campus minister (only one of the men had been allowed to accompany us). It took 2½ hours. Pretty detailed.

We finally got back to S.F. and then drove home. And that's when the unexpected part happened. My cool and liberal friends just really had trouble accepting me having an abortion. I was really brave; they couldn't have done it. Again and again. I began to feel like some kind of freak - brave, but still a freak. The point was that I really wasn't brave, but that I had done what I felt I had to do. I had considered the alternatives - but to me there was no alternative.

The other response was that girls who got pregnant were dumb. Yeah, thanks a lot.

I suppose I had a mild trauma for awhile. I sort of withdrew for a couple of months. My roommates thought I should go to the counselling service. I didn't, and things got to be o.k. after a while.

Looking back now, I just wish that I had really felt that I had the right to do as I did. I feel now that I did. Women do have the right to control their bodies. And we'll do it illegally if we have to.

There is no reason for women not to talk to one another about abortions. We are kept apart, told that the woman who has one is different. Women really aren't. Once we accept the right to our own bodies, and thus the right of all women to their bodies, we have come one step closer to affirming our sisterhood. And one step closer to radical social change.

FUND AND SPEAK-OUT

The Medical Issues cell has started an abortion fund to aid sisters obtaining an abortion.

Please mail any money you can to:

Abortion Fund
301 Jefferson Building
Iowa City, Iowa 52240

The Medical Issues collective is planning to sponsor an abortion speak-out in the near future. We would like all women who would be interested in sharing their abortion experiences to contact us. Please phone 338-7027 in Iowa City and we will give you more details about the speak-out.

I was in a prison for little..... girls. I was new and was just..... getting acquainted. There was one.. little girl, around ten years old,.. who the other girls shied away from. She was the essence of life and..... energy. She was so delightful and... joyful that I could not resist her.. We talked and played a little in.... the hall (the prison was patterned.. after a school) and when it was..... time to go back to our cells she.... asked me to come visit her. When we got to her cell, I realized that.... she was in maximum security. They.. were going to execute her. Two..... doors locked after us. One old man. guarded the outer cell and another.. stayed inside keeping the little.... girl in his sight all the time. The cell was old and bare and in complete contrast with the youth and beauty.. of the little girl. I stayed for... just a little while and then ner-... vously said I should go.....She..... pleaded that I stay and keep her.... company. I was going to ask when... she was going to be executed and.... assure her that we would see each... other before then, but I realized... you don't ask questions like that... So I just left. The next morning I. found out that she was to be killed. that day. I was hysterical to see.. her again before she died. I could. make her happy for a moment by my... visit and I could tell her I loved.. her. But what good is happiness.... and love I thought, when you are to. die. There was nothing I could give. her; nothing I could do to help her.

We were on our way to the gym.... for a recreation period when I..... looked down the corridor and saw.... them leading the little girl out....

I hid behind the gym door as if to.. shield myself from the pain of..... watching, but I had to look. I..... pounded the door in pain and frus-.. tration and knocked one of the..... panes out. I quick walked away..... whistling as if I hadn't done it, but a lady at the authoritarian .... desk across the gym summoned me over.

At this point there is a scene of comic relief that I don't understand. in light of the terror of the rest of the dream. As I walked across the... floor, I figured it was all over and. I would have to confess, but the..... woman at the desk tried to make me... say that I did not do it. I was very confused because the prison wasn't... usually run this way, but she ex-.... plained that she didn't know how to.. fill out forms for admitting some-... thing, only forms for denying some-.. thing. As she was copying information from my record onto the form, I no-.. ticed a mistake on my record. They.. had me down as editor of the Black... Panther Paper but I told her I was... white and couldn't be. She gave me.. my record and told me to sit down.... and correct it. The recreation per-. iod which was an icecapades like..... thing, was about to begin so I sat... down in the first row next to my..... grandmother.

All of a sudden I remembered the.. little girl and my eyes saw through.. everything like superman's do. I saw the little girl seated in the prison. yard with a black bag over her head.. and flanked by two men. She had just been shot by a man twenty-five feet.. behind her. One of the two men lifted the bag from her head so she could... run off the last bit of her life much like we let a chicken with its head.. cut off. She rose and ran to a group. of girls playing nearby, who were.... put there for all executions. It was as if they could afford to let her... play after they were assured that this personification of freedom was safely dead.

Each bunch of playing girls dis-.. persed in fear as she ran toward..... them, crushing the little girl who... didn't understand why they wouldn't.. play with her anymore. Finally,..... death overcame her and she fell down. still.

Dale's Dream

Pterodactyl, the Grinnell College underground, finally won a long, drawn-out and crippling court struggle, May 22nd, when a Waterloo, Iowa (Blackhawk County) district court judge, dismissing the case against four of us Pterodactyl vendors, declared Iowa's obscenity law unconstitutional!

Last November, in Cedar Falls, Iowa, home of the University of Northern Iowa, the four of us were charged with a felony for selling an issue of Ptero which contained, among other things, a page mocking Playboy magazine. Ptero's mock "Playboy ad" showed a photograph of a naked young man with an erect penis masturbating in front of Playboy "fold-out" nudes. The ad copy actually originated from an ad Playboy ran in the New York Times: "What sort of man reads Playboy? He's young, active, affluent. A hard man to get through to. To sell him you've got to first reach him. With a medium that really involves him. Only one medium does it. PLAYBOY."

The Iowa law banned importation, production, possession and distribution, of printed materials "containing obscene language or obscene print, pictures or descriptions manifestly tending to corrupt the morals of youth." The law allowed for absolute arbitrary pig power over free publications; not even an obscenity hearing was needed before a bust! Any simple-minded pig could declare an underground obscene. And this law could be used to suppress any Iowa paper which threatened the system in any way.

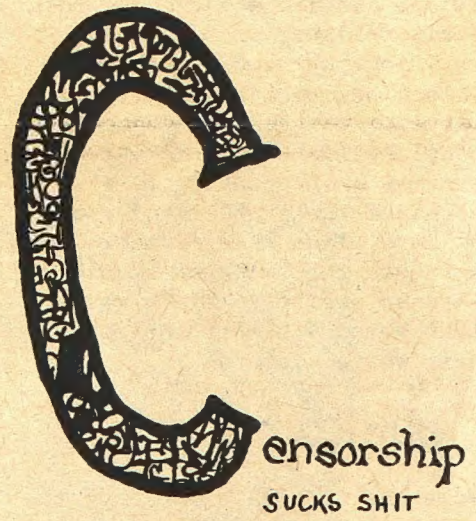
Pterodactyl and its lawyer, Clark Holmes of the ACLU, set about to abolish this law. A precedent for the case was found in a Supreme Court decision to strike down a Michigan statute similar to Iowa's. Said Iowa Judge Blair Wood: "The Supreme Court of the United States, in an opinion by Justice Frankfurter, finds that the Michigan statute 'by quarantining the general public against books not too rugged for grown men and women in order to shield juvenile innocence' is, in effect, 'to burn down the house to roast the pig'...."

The four Pterodactyl vendors were Grinnell student Jake Margolin; Antioch student Bob Honig; Pterodactyl staffers Kit Leder and myself. (Kit is now part of Vocations for Social Change in California.) Unfortunately, our arrest forced Pterodactyl onto the road to ruin....and we can only begin to pick up the pieces now. When we were busted, many of our papers, our money and some film were seized. Iowa newsstands were afraid to continue carrying Pteros, and some other staff members refused to put out another issue unless they could censor material beforehand (to prevent further tie-ups in court.) This faction then split to join a new paper, the High and Mighty.

But the rest of us wanted a free Pterodactyl! We were put out of commission for 6 months as we struggled it out in court. But we won, at least the first round. There are other Iowa laws that still threaten our existence; in fact, the four of us may still be tried under other sections of the Iowa Code. But we hope we can get these, too, struck down. CENSORSHIP SUCKS SHIT! Not only does it result in the suppression of controversial political views and, thus, in the repression of minorities but, very simply, any attempt to hide reality makes for ignorance, stagnancy, prejudice, perversion and fear....it makes for Amerikan pig society!

The struggle against censorship is also being fought by the NOLA Express in New Orleans as a result of reprinting the Ptero Playboy ad. They were busted by the feds for sending "obscene material" thru the mails. The Nola's Darlene Fife and Robert Head will prove the bullshit of charging that mockery of Playboy is obscene. Support the NOLA and Power to the people's Press! Off the Pig!

Krys Neuman



Grinnell Women's Liberation Statement in Support of Pterodactyl "Playboy Ad"

Grinnell Women's Liberation supported the "Playboy ad," which ran in the November 11, 1969 Pterodactyl and the November 20, 1969 Nola Express, as part of a continuing campaign against Playboy magazine's exploitation of female bodies and male minds.

Last year at Grinnell College (February 5, 1969) - students disrobed at a campus discussion with Brice Draper, a representative from the magazine, to protest Playboy's stereotyping and commercializing of the female body in order to sell the magazine.

This year's effort - the "Playboy ad" - parodied Playboy's dehumanizing manipulation of the male reader for the benefit of the magazine and its advertisers. The text of this particular "ad" did, in fact, appear in ads for buying Playboy magazine which were run in the New York Times.

We believe this "ad" to be significant social and political commentary upon Playboy magazine and its advertisers. This "ad" has our full support.

Grinnell Women's Liberation

Getting it Together

History and direction of the feminist movement was the basis for panels and workshops at the Southern Female Liberation Meeting at Mt. Beulah, Mississippi, May 8, 9, 10.

Approximately 300 women attended the conference, sponsored by the Southern Female Rights Union. Twenty-four hour day care was volunteered by several men.

We left Iowa City with great expectations, neither of us ever having been in the South before. Our 28-hour bus ride went surprisingly fast, as we spent time getting to know each other and sharing love as only sisters do.

Mt. Beulah, just outside Edwards, is a plantation-like cluster of buildings financed by Carpetbaggers to prepare ex-slaves for their economic exploitation.

We arrived weary, but were soon affected by the contagious anticipation of the next two days. The literature table, set up throughout the conference, kept our interest for some time. Hilary Langhorst sang after we'd retired.

Beginning with breakfast Saturday we sampled real southern food. Grits, cornbread, black-eyed peas and fried chicken tasted better to us there, prepared by experienced female cooks.

Saturday was full of informative talks that kept us taking notes. Evelyn Reed, Socialist-Worker's Party scholar, and Virginia Collins, from Republic of New Africa, spoke on the hidden history of women.

Evelyn Reed traced the history of the family as we know it today. Basically her speech demonstrated through scientific Marxist analysis the economic and social exploitative nature of the marriage institution.

Virginia Collins, with a charismatic aura, spoke on women's oppression from a black perspective. She emphasized the importance of taking someone's complete frame of reference into consideration when speaking to them. She recognized the problems of black women as more class than skin problems. She also feels that because of black men's intense desire to mimic white men, black women are more oppressed than their white sisters.

After dinner we heard brief synopses of the workshops for the afternoon. Martha Atkins spoke on earlier feminist movements and expressed hope that today's movement could learn from the past mistakes.

Joreen traced the history of women's roles in western society from an economist's viewpoint. Hilary Langhorst described roots of female oppression in the structure of Christianity and its ideology.

Virginia Collins expanded on her earlier talk, re-emphasizing the frame of reference idea, and how teachers can learn from people they're teaching.

Roxanne Dunbar spoke on the myth of southern womanhood and its affect on our southern movement. She explained how material power differences keep white and black women from working together.

Saturday evening we heard a panel discussion on how to build the female liberation movement. Roxanne spoke of her efforts at mass education. Judith Brown explained how Gainsville, Fla. women use consciousness-raising to formulate all theories and actions. Linda Seese told of her experiences living in a women's collective.

Dana Densmore, Boston, talked about each of us doing what's comfortable: finding the best way of expressing what we feel. Virginia spoke on organizing women in terms of their own situation. Joreen expanded this idea, suggesting we try to reach women with similar backgrounds before trying to overcome class differences.

A discussion of the pros and cons of hetero- or homogeneous groups, and problems in developing class consciousness ensued. "Softskin" was shown after the discussion.

We thought it ironic that around church time on Mother's Day the sisters gathered for a new kind of movement service: worship of physical fitness for self-defense. Sisters from Boston demonstrated Tae Kwon Do, a Korean form of karate.

After dinner Roxanne commented on the topics to be covered in the afternoon workshops. She expressed her views on the different kind of oppression poor women have and child care as a need of middle class women. She related the problem of elitism to middle class women who can't accept leadership from those who may know more about certain aspects of our movement. She expressed fear of being coopted by abortion reform, especially in its potential lethalness against those the government would like to eliminate.

Trying to learn as much as we could we attended several workshops. In the homosexuality one we discussed the very un-stereotyped lesbian relationships that are beginning to evolve out of the movement. We also discussed the fear "straight" sisters often feel toward lesbians, and the advantage of forming separate gay groups within WL.

In the workshop on divisions among women, Judith Brown endorsed consciousness-raising as a project conducive to sisterhood and well worth the struggle to draw general conclusions from personal, isolated experiences.

Two elitism, democracy and leadership workshops were combined with one on the needs of poor women. During the discussion a disagreement arose on the importance of elitism in the feminist movement. The way the conference was set up and the fact that a few women led the workshops was criticized. The disagreement ended when some women left the meeting. A discussion followed on the validity of each woman's experience and the need to listen and criticize our ideas carefully.

Virginia dealt with questions of feminist politics. Hilary expounded on her year-long effort to develop a program of community-controlled public childcare centers. Tae Kwon Do students related women's physical weakness to sexism. Martha Atkins explored the need to redefine our concepts of sexuality and love to help retain our necessary autonomous woman's movement.

From speaking with southern women, we began to see what different obstacles these women face in organizing their sisters. Christianity is one of the biggest barriers because of its strong basis and history in their culture. Also, chivalry is not dead, but a stifling, condescending, protective attitude most southern males still champion.

By the end of the afternoon almost everyone had left for home. Those of us remaining were feeling good toward each other and hated to leave. On the steps of the eating hall those of us who didn't participate witnessed a massacre of long locks and the emergence of new, proud, practical, healthy-looking short-haired women. We laughed a lot, shared a lot and soon left for home with a renewed vigor and collective strength with our sisters across the nation.

Lori and Abbie

our ad policy

The Woman as Consumer is one of the most evil of the sexual stereotypes laid upon women. Most advertisement plays upon this stereotype, reinforcing it at the same time. The old cry of "Buy, Buy, Buy" must be replaced by advertisement that limits itl advertisement that limits itself to a simple statement of what is offered to the public. We join other women's liberation publications in accepting only non-exploitative advertisements.

Ads are limited to a maximum length of 2". Each ad costs $5.00 each time it is run. All advertisement must be paid for in advance. We reserve the right to reject any ad.

ads

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A Journal of Liberation

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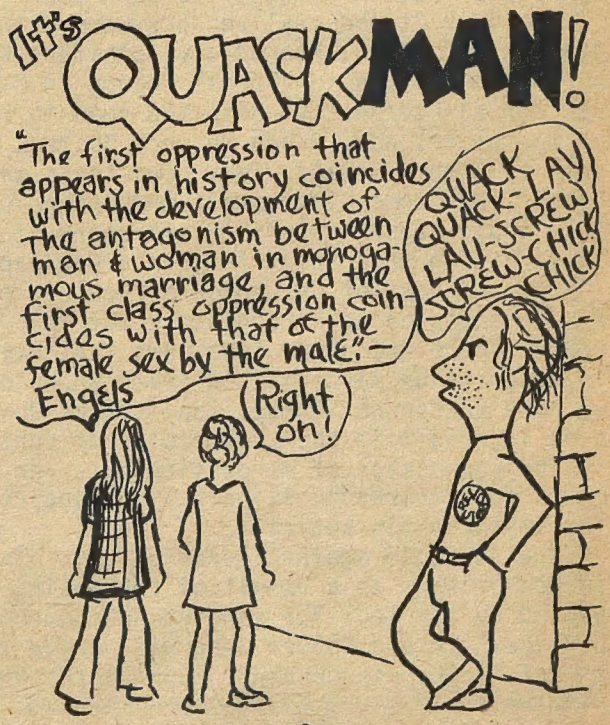
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"The first oppression that appears in history coincides with the development of the antagonism between man & woman in monogamous marriage, and the first class oppression coincides with that of the female sex by the male."—Engels
QUACK QUACK-LAY LAY-SCREW SCREW-CHICK CHICK
Right on!